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(R)

December 19, 1949

TO : G - Mr. Rusk

FROM : NEA - Mr. Hare

SUBJECT: Summary of Discussions with Mr. Michael Wright of the British Foreign Office.

I am attaching for your information informal summaries of the discussions which were conducted with Mr. Michael Wright of the British Foreign Office (Tab A). Mr. McGhee and Mr. Wright held the talks between November 14 and 17 and I continued them on November 22. There is also attached for reference the full record of the meetings (Tab B) as agreed with the British.

As was brought out by Mr. McGhee in his introductory remarks at the first meeting with Mr. Wright, it is clearly understood by both parties that the conclusions reached did not constitute binding agreements but that the talks were designed to afford an opportunity for finding areas of agreement subject to further examination and to the obtaining of higher approval as required.

A summary of the conversations with Mr. Wright on the former Italian Colonies (included here as part of Tab B) was sent to you separately under cover of my memorandum of November 29, 1949.

Copies of this record have been furnished S/P and EUR, both of which were represented during the talks.

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cc: EUR
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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION ON THE NEAR EAST

Mr. George C. McGhee - Mr. Michael Wright

November 14-17, 1949

November 14, 1949

I Introductory Discussions:

(1) The general objectives of the United States and United Kingdom Governments in the Middle East are basically the same.

(2) The maintenance and extension of a friendly attitude on the part of the Middle Eastern countries to the United Kingdom and United States is a vital factor in the security of the Western Powers. The denial of the area to communist influence is essential.

(3) United Kingdom and American interests in the Middle East are parallel and not conflicting.

(4) The United Kingdom would welcome a decision by the United States to assume greater responsibility in the area.

(5) It must be our common aim to align the forces of nationalism in the Middle East against communism and to guide them into channels friendly to the Western Powers.

(6) With the bitterness of the Palestine problem receding, the moment for the United States and the United Kingdom to take more constructive action to achieve common objectives is at hand. The United States Government is at present considering how far it can go in making a more positive approach to the area.

II Discussion on a Palestine Settlement:

(1) The solution of the Palestine question should remain within a UN framework. The Palestine Conciliation Commission should continue to seek a settlement in every way, including direct talks and mediation by the Commission.

(2) The Commission's terms of reference should not be changed, and the Commission should remain entirely divorced from the relief and development program.

(3) United States participation in economic development programs must be based on association of the program with a general settlement.

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(4) While informal action by the United States or United Kingdom might facilitate settlement, general statements which might postpone the parties' coming to grips with the problem should be avoided.

(5) The United Kingdom believes the incorporation of Arab Palestine into Jordan would remove a cause of instability and would aid in solving the refugee problem.

(6) The United States Government accepts the principle of incorporation and is concerned only with the question of timing.

III Points Arising from the Discussion on Long-Range Development in the Middle East:

(1) The United Kingdom considers positive action is now essential on both actual works measures and improvements of social conditions. A priority list of works projects has been drawn up by the United Kingdom and communicated to the United States.

(2) The United Kingdom believes the cost of long-range development in the Middle East is of manageable proportions and will lead to substantial results.

(3) The Arabs must take the major responsibility for carrying out development work. For this reason, and because of national sensibilities, it would be profitable to work through development boards set up in the Middle East countries themselves. Long-range development plans should be approached on a country-to-country basis. Any regional development organization arising out of the ESM report could assist these boards and coordinate outside assistance.

(4) From the United States point of view the Point IV and any long-range development program must be coordinated with the Clapp report.

IV Points Arising from a Discussion of the Report of the Economic Survey Mission:

(1) The United Kingdom has seven criteria for approaching the problem of relief and works projects:

(a) That transition from relief to relief works be made as soon as possible.

(b) That any new agency should not be administered or controlled by the Secretariat of the UN.

(c) That the new agency should not include Slav or other undesirable membership, and should, if possible, be composed of British, American, French and Turkish representatives.

(d) That local governments should be as closely associated as possible in responsibility for the execution of the program.

(e) That the new agency should not, at this state, be made responsible for all development in the area as a whole.

(f) That the proposed arrangement should not involve any government directly in the responsibility of handling relief funds raised under UN auspices.

(g) That the UK's contribution could be in non-convertible sterling only.

(2) The United States Government agrees with the above criteria.

November 15, 1949

V Discussion of Arab Unity:

(1) United States and United Kingdom Governments oppose political change by force in the Middle East, but would not obstruct peaceful and constitutional change.

(2) A Middle East pact on the Atlantic model is not possible.

(3) The United States and United Kingdom would examine their attitude toward the extension of United Kingdom treaty obligations to additional Arab countries.

(4) A revision of Arab League activities leading to more concern with economic development should be encouraged.

VI Discussion on Former Italian Colonies:

(1) Italian Somaliland: Although the United Kingdom had never been happy about an Italian return to Somaliland and felt that the Italians might run into serious trouble when they did return, the British would do everything possible to assist in a rapid transfer of administration to the Italians, but they would leave no one behind after the transfer was completed. The UK would like to see the transfer, which has been planned as "Operation Caesar", take place in February or March 1950. Therefore they hope the Trusteeship Council will

approve the trusteeship agreement for Italian Somaliland as soon as possible.

(2) Eritrea: It was agreed that no particular action was necessary pending the completion of the investigation by the UN Commission in Eritrea during the next six months.

(3) Libya: With regard to future developments in Libya after the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution, the following points were made:

(a) It was agreed that the headquarters of the UN Commissioner and Council for Libya should be outside the territory.

(b) Of all the boundary problems to be considered by the Interim Committee, it was agreed that the frontier between Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia presented the most serious problem and might lead to a great deal of trouble.

(c) The UK desires to conclude a treaty with an independent Cyrenaica within a fairly short time after the GA Resolution is passed. The US agreed that the UK would be able to proceed with its plans for Cyrenaica but pointed out that much depended upon the method followed in carrying out those plans.

(d) The UK would like to have a long-term treaty with Cyrenaica of about 20 years duration, perhaps on the lines of their treaties with Iraq and Jordan. It was agreed that a major legal question would be the status of the treaty when the union of Libya occurs, as envisaged in the GA Resolution.

(e) The UK Government had decided that it was unwilling to make a treaty which would commit it to the defense of all of Libya. The US must, of course, accept the British decision on this matter.

(f) The UK plans to set up in the near future a Tripolitanian administration similar to that already established in Cyrenaica. In doing so, the British Administration will promote and protect US strategic interests in Tripolitania. The major US strategic interest is to maintain our airbase at Wheelus Field and supporting facilities in the area.

(g) The US regards the Fezzan as a part of Tripolitania and, while we desire stability in French North

Africa for strategic reasons, we feel that the French might be urged to allow the local population a greater share in the government of those areas. The UK regards the French attitude as complicating the problems of the Fezzan and Tripolitania--otherwise the UK would have promoted constitutional developments looking towards local self-government in Tripolitania much faster. Under present circumstances, the UK is not prepared to approach the French or say anything at all about French policy in North Africa.

(4) United Kingdom Plans for Treaty with Cyrenaica: In a conversation between Mr. Michael Wright and Mr. Adrian Fisher, Legal Adviser to the Department, on November 18, 1949, the general consensus was that the best procedure by which the UK might obtain a treaty with an independent Cyrenaica would be on the following lines:

(a) The Emir would proclaim the independence of Cyrenaica stating that this was a step in the furtherance of the General Assembly Resolution and would give a formal and solemn undertaking that the Cyrenaican government would carry out the provisions of the Resolution so far as Cyrenaica was concerned.

(b) The Emir would request His Majesty's Government to recognize Cyrenaica as an independent state and His Government as its lawful Government. He would also ask His Majesty's Government to enter into negotiations for an agreement providing for the defense of Cyrenaica.

(c) His Majesty's Government would formally recognize Cyrenaican independence and would take the necessary administrative steps.

(d) Both His Majesty's Government and the Emir would notify the Secretary General of the United Nations at appropriate stages of the steps taken. In communicating with the Secretary General, His Majesty's Government would take the occasion to say that they had acted in accordance with their obligations under the Italian Peace Treaty to give effect to the Resolution of the General Assembly. They would also refer to Mr. McNeil's statement of the 9th November in which he gave notice to the United Nations of His Majesty's Government's intentions.

(e) His Majesty's Government would, in cooperation with the Commission, make a report in accordance with paragraph 10 (c) of the Resolution, to the Fifth Session of the General Assembly on the steps which had been taken.

The United States representatives said that they would think over the most helpful form of statement which the United States Government might make when questioned at the time of these events.

November 17, 1949

VII Discussions on Long-Term Economic Development in the Middle East Based on Papers Submitted by Foreign Office Representatives:

(1) There was general agreement on the program of Economic and Social Development outlined in the interim Report of the Middle East (Official) Committee on Economic and Social Development.

(2) The United Kingdom would welcome any measures which the United States felt it could take in the field of technical assistance.

(3) The coordination of United States and United Kingdom effort in the field of technical assistance could best be achieved in London and Washington, rather than in the area itself. This matter would be further studied in London and at the Conference of United States representatives at Istanbul.

(4) It was recognized that great progress had been made in surveying the economic resources of the Middle East and that what was most required at the present state was the execution of selected projects.

VIII Discussions on the Haifa Refinery:

(1) It is desirable that the refinery should be opened as early as possible and pressure on the Government concerned should be maintained to that end. This pressure should not be of a nature to lead to a major clash, however.